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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Rapid City Soldier recognized for dedication to Suriname mission

*Story by Pfc. Jacqueline Fitzgerald
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PARAMARIBO, Suriname – Sgt. 1st Class Eric Jennings received the Meritorious Service Metal on Wednesday, July 16, for his outstanding work on South Dakota's involvement and success in Beyond the Horizon 2008.

Jennings, a member of the 155th Engineer Company of Rapid City, S.D., worked to ensure the unit's success by preparing a bill of materials for each project site and assisting the engineer officer to gain necessary materials from local markets.

"His dedication and commitment to success makes him an outstanding leader," said 1st Sgt. Michael Shay, 155th Engineer Company. "He always has a great attitude and is constantly looking for new ways to improve the work sites."

Not only did he support his unit while on location, but he also went above the call of duty and volunteered to assist other Soldiers from across the state through their deployment process before shipping home.

"One of the biggest challenges was getting all the different units coordinated and organized for arrival in Suriname, but it's worth the work when we get a chance to start renovating and actually see how we are helping these communities," said Jennings.

Jennings spent his two-week rotation supporting the Soldiers' engineer projects as well as preparing for the needs of the next rotation.

"Through his actions, Sgt. 1st Class Jennings has gained the respect of Soldiers and leaders at all levels," said Shay.

Beyond the Horizon 2008 is an exercise that includes humanitarian and civic assistance projects, construction development, medical readiness training exercises, subject matter

expertise exchanges and state partnership activities. The construction portion of this exercise is being completed by South Dakota, as its partnership nation is Suriname. The State Partnership Program helps to “build a bridge” between Suriname and the U.S. by establishing mutual understanding on a grassroots level.

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Photo Cutline:



080716-A-5202T-162: PARAMARIBO, Suriname – Sgt. 1st Class Eric Jennings shakes hands with Brig. Gen. Keith Corbett, assistant adjutant general for the South Dakota Army National Guard, on Wednesday, July 16, after receiving the Meritorious Service Metal for his outstanding work on South Dakota’s involvement and success in Beyond the Horizon 2008 in Paramaribo, Suriname. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen)(RELEASED)

Link to photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/080716-A-5202T-162.jpg>

FOR MORE INFORMATION, contact Maj. Orson Ward at (605) 737-6721, cell (605) 431-8753, or Maj. Lyndon Jones, Beyond the Horizon 2008 – Suriname Public Affairs Officer at cell 011.597.0880.8166 or e-mail lyndon.d.jones@us.army.mil.